

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I filed cloture on the substitute amendment and the bill itself. I have had a conversation with the Republican leader earlier this evening. I am hopeful we can get a list—a short list—of amendments and a path to complete work on this bill as soon as possible. The FISA bill is something we have to do before we leave. I have said that several times this week. I have had conversations with several interested Members. I am hopeful we can get an agreement to complete action on this matter tomorrow.

The DOD authorization conference report, they have completed that work. It has been tedious and very hard. Senator McCain and Senator Levin have worked very hard. We are hopeful we can lock in an agreement to vote on that tomorrow. We also have to confirm three district court judges. We hope to be able to do that tomorrow. We have a lot of work to do.

The House, as we speak—how to say this in a kind way. They are trying to come up with something. They have had to work all day to come up with something. We are waiting for their “something.”

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DISASTERS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, tonight we are wrapping up affairs here on the floor, and what is going on right now is that the main substitute amendment that had a whole series of other amendments attached to it that has been the result of the work over the last couple of days has been withdrawn, so we are back to square one in terms of addressing a series of national disasters around the country.

Tomorrow, with the new amendment, we will start off the day with a new basic amendment and a new chance to have amendments to the replacement. I explain this simply to say that a number of Senators who had amendments over the last couple of days will come back tomorrow and will ask to have their amendments be considered. I will be one of them, and I wanted to explain why.

In my home State of Oregon, we had the worst forest fires in a century this summer, and the devastation to ranchers and farmers was enormous. There was the loss of forage on their own land, the loss of forage on BLM land,

certainly the loss of livestock, and the loss of miles of fencing in these fires. Basically, whole ranching enterprises were destroyed.

The largest of these fires was larger than the Presiding Officer's State, the State of Rhode Island. That is an enormous fire. That was just one of the many fires we had sweeping our State, and this was not just something that happened in Oregon. This happened in many States this summer because it goes along with something else, which is we had the worst drought in many parts of the country. So we have farmers and ranchers across this Nation devastated this past summer by drought, devastated by fires which were larger because of drought conditions.

Normally we would have had disaster programs to assist with these disasters. These disaster programs were authorized in the farm bill. In this Chamber we had a bipartisan coming together. We passed the farm bill, and we sent it over to the House. There it has sat, month after month after month, while our farmers and our ranchers all across this Nation faced these disasters with no assistance, no assistance in a situation in which they should be able to expect assistance. It is the tradition of our Nation that when there are extraordinary disasters, we rally together, respond and rebuild those communities, whether they be urban disasters or whether they be rural disasters. But because the farm bill has not been passed, not gotten to the President, these disaster programs have not been reauthorized, and our farmers and ranchers watch us and wait. They say where is our government, our partner, when disaster occurs?

They know the tax dollars they pay go into the central government and have many times been allocated to others around this Nation facing disasters of all kinds—earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, droughts. But these individuals, now that Mother Nature has struck them, stand waiting.

We have an opportunity tomorrow to right this wrong. We have a bill that is about the enormous terrible disaster that affected our Northeastern States in the form of Hurricane Sandy.

We should be absolutely expedient in taking care of communities so dramatically affected. But at the same time, isn't it right that we take care of the other communities around this country that have faced disasters this last year that are waiting on us?

I invite my colleagues to come to the floor and explain to me if they feel it is not right to take care of the other disasters we have had this last year. I would like to be able to go to the ranchers and farmers in my State and explain to them the arguments that others might bring about why their disaster, the destruction of their livelihood that the great hand of Mother Nature struck, why we shouldn't address and assist them when we are assisting others so dramatically affected around

this Nation. Quite frankly, I have no answer. I have no answer. I can't think of an answer.

Will any of my 99 colleagues come to me and explain why we shouldn't pass this amendment tomorrow, the amendment that I will propose? I will tell you that a number of us came together to propose this amendment. Senator STABENOW, Senator MCCASKILL, Senator BAUCUS, Senator WYDEN, Senator TIM JOHNSON, Senator FRANKEN, Senator TOM UDALL, representing all kinds of parts of our Nation, who understand the impact that drought has had, understand the impact the fires have had. They have come together from different parts of the Nation to say we are in this together. Let's not leave stranded our ranchers and farmers when we gather to debate tomorrow. Let's let this amendment be brought forward, and let's get it passed as part of this very appropriate response to this very terrible disaster called Hurricane Sandy.

LIMITED SERVICE EXCLUSION

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to address an issue that has arisen between companies within the moving industry. Recently, a group of full-service moving companies has attempted to change rules established by law, regulations, and court findings. These full-service moving companies are aiming to undermine the clear intent of Congress by avoiding the formal rulemaking or legislative process. The changes sought would benefit their companies and damage their competitors within the sector.

In recent years, full-service moving companies have faced new competition from a growing number of companies that allow consumers a “do it yourself” alternative to more expensive, traditional movers. Some general freight motor carriers have been offering “do it yourself” consumers an option for moving: a non-household goods motor carrier drops off empty containers or trailers at the consumer's doorstep for the consumer to load, the consumer loads the trailer—individually, with help from neighbors, or by hiring a third party. After loading, the consumer calls the container company or freight carrier to pick up the container or trailer, the container company then arranges for an authorized general freight or flatbed carrier to pick up and haul the loaded container, dropping it off on the requested delivery date for the consumer to unload; and the carrier returns to pick up the empty container or trailer when unloaded. The customer is able to purchase the level of service he or she wants and manage the process themselves from start to finish.

Mr. President, that is precisely the type of service alternative Congress intended to encourage when it included the so-called “Limited Service Exclusion” in the “Household Goods Mover Oversight Enforcement and Reform Act